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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Fifty-seventh session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 1437th MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Friday, 25 August 2000, at 10 a.m.

Chairman: Mr. SHERIFIS

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The meeting was called to order at 10.30 a.m.

ORGANIZATIONAL AND OTHER MATTERS (agenda item 2) (continued)
(CERD/C/57/Misc.38)

1. Mr. BANTON (Rapporteur) drew attention to document CERD/C/57/Misc.38, which contained a partial list of country rapporteurs for State party reports and for countries awaiting consideration under the review procedure. In the case of the United States, he proposed that a country rapporteur should not be appointed before receipt of the report

2. After a discussion in which Mr. BANTON, Mr. PILLAI and Ms. McDOUGALL took part, the CHAIRMAN read out the names of the country rapporteurs appointed thus far.

3. Mr. BANTON (Rapporteur) observed that first notifications to States parties that they were due to be considered under the review procedure were useful because they prompted the submission of overdue reports. In the case of countries which had not responded to notification of second reviews, however, the chances that third reviews would yield any results were small. Experience had shown that the States parties in question were more likely to respond if the secretariat informed them in advance of the review notification that the Committee intended to review them at some stage during the coming year, without specifying which session.

4. He believed that the maximum number of periodic reports the Committee could consider at any given session was 12. If, however, the United States report was to be considered at the January session, the maximum would be 10. Reports were normally considered in the order received. The Committee might, however, wish to give priority to initial reports or to reports from countries where the situation was pressing.

5. Mr. DIACONU noted that one of the main reasons for meeting in New York was to hear States parties which had no mission in Geneva. Thus, in addition to the United States, five or six of those countries could be scheduled within the order of priorities, with particular attention to those due for second and third reviews.

6. Ms. RUEDA-CASTAÑON (Secretary of the Committee) informed the Committee that the following countries did not have missions in Geneva: Barbados, Botswana, Fiji, Guyana, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mali, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands and Togo. All of them were second- and third-review countries.

7. Ms. ZOU said that Mr. Diaconu's point was important; an effort should be made to include a few such non-European States parties among those to be heard in New York.

8. Mr. BANTON concurred, and suggested that reminders sent to any countries scheduled for review at the January session should specifically draw attention to the issue raised by Mr. Diaconu.

9. The CHAIRMAN agreed that every effort should be made to include some of the States parties with representation only in New York. In response to suggestions from members, he read out a tentative list of States parties whose periodic reports would be considered at the next

session. If the United States did not submit its report in time for the January session, the Chairman and the secretariat would fill the vacuum from the regular order of priorities.

10. Ms. RAADI (Representative of the Secretary-General), in reply to queries by members, said that, as a General Assembly decision was required to approve the holding of the Committee's following session in New York in January, the venue could not be confirmed before November at the earliest. In the meantime, she had requested clarification from the Conference Services Division as to whether, if the New York venue was not approved, the session could still be held in Geneva during the same period in January, to enable members to maintain their schedules. She expected a prompt reply on the second point.

11. The CHAIRMAN observed that, if the New York venue was not approved, the Committee would then have to decide between January or the usual March period.

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12. The CHAIRMAN said that the Committee had worked well and expeditiously. It had examined 13 periodic reports, held an innovative thematic discussion and given a well-attended press conference on these, adopted a new general recommendation, worked on communications from individuals and established three working groups on the World Conference against Racism which had produced a substantial provisional document.

13. After an exchange of courtesies, he declared the fifty-seventh session of the Committee closed.

The meeting rose at 11.10 a.m.